

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRETORIA FLASH

SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 7152

S E C R E T CAIRO 12619

EXDIS HANDLE AS NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM CHARGE, DEPT FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ENRG US EG IS

SUBJ: TALKS WITH ISRAELIS ON AMOCO

REF: (A) SECTO 27167, (B) CAIRO 12616

1. I DELIVERED YOUR MESSAGE TO FAHMY'S CHEF DE CABINET OSAMA AL BAZ AT 1115 LOCAL TIME THIS MORNING. (PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS ARRIVED ATU AIRPORT AT 1100 A.M. AND FAHMY IS ACCOMPANYING HIM TO MEETING IN ISMAILIA WITH PRESIDENT SADAT, WHICH IS SCHEDULED AT 8 P.M. THIS EVENING. FAHMY WILL THUS NOT BE AVAILABLE, EXCEPT PERHAPS BY TELEPHONE, UNTIL PROBABLY TOMORROW.) I TOLD OSAMA AL BAZ THAT I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS MESSAGE WITH FAHMY AND WAS AVAILABLE AT ANY TIME TO DO SO, IN ORDER TO OBTAIN GOE RESPONSE TO YOUR MESSAGE, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS SEPTEMBER 21 DEADLINE FOR AMOCO DRILLING AT SITE 304.1.

2. OSAMA AL BAZ COMMENTED THAT YOUR MESSAGE WAS DISAPPOINTING NEWS AND SEEMED TO INDICATE ISRAELI COMPLETE UNWILLINGNESS TO WORK OUT A PRACTICAL SOLUTION TO THE DRILLING PROBLEM. HE SAID HE WAS AFRAID THAT THIS ISRAELI ATTITUDE WOULD INCREASE TENSION

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IN THE AREA AT PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE TIME (HE

DESCRIBED PROSPECTS FOR RESOLUTION OF LEBANESE CRISIS AS RESULT EGYPTIAN EFFORTS AND MEETINGS WITH LEBANESE LEASERS INCLUDING SARKIS AS "VERY ENCOURAGING"). AL BAZ AGREED THAT IT APPEARED THAT SEPTEMBER 21 DEADLINE WOULD HAVE TO BE EXTENDED FOR A LIMITED PERIOD IN ORDER NOT TO PENALIZE AMOCO UNFAIRLY AND SAID THAT HE THOUGHT SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT. HE ASKED ME TO INFORM MINPET HILAL OF THE CURRENT SITUATION SO THAT HE COULD MAKE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH AMOCO. NEVERTHELESS, HE REMINDED ME THAT FONMIN FAHMY HAD TOLD ME THAT ISRAELI ACTIONS AND ATTITUDE IN THIS MATTER WERE COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE TO GOE AND THAT GOE WAS NOT WITHOUT OPTIONS TO RESPOND TO ISRAELI ACTIONS.

3. WITH REGARD TO DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SECRETARY AND ALLON IN NEW YORK, OSAMA AL BAZ ASKED WHEN ALLON PLANNED TO BE THERE. ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY SO, THIS QUESTION SEEMED CLEARLY RELATED TO PERIOD OF EXTENSION OF DEADLINE. I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED OF WHEN ALLON IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH THE SECRETARY.

4. I AM NOW TRYING TO REACH MINPET HILAL CONCERNING EXTENSION OF DEADLINE, WHICH IS MATTER UNDER HIS RESPONSIBILITY.

5. COMMENT: AL BAZ'S REACTIONS TO YOUR MESSAGE OF COURSE CAN NOT BE CONSIDERED A DEFINITIVE EGYPTIAN RESPONSE, WHICH WILL HAVE TO COME FROM FAHMY. NEVERTHELESS, AL BAZ IS CLOSELY ATTUNED TO FAHMY'S VIEWS. AL BAZ'S REACTIONS SUGGESTS THAT FAHMY WILL REGARD THE NEWS IN YOUR MESSAGE AS EVIDENCE THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE EFFECTIVELY STONEWALLED USG, AMOCO AND GOE AND THAT HIS VERBAL REACTION WILL BE QUITE STRONG. GIVEN HIS OTHER PREOCCUPATIONS AT THE MOMENT, HOWEVER, I THINK YOUR MESSAGE WILL INDUCE HIM NOT TO RECOMMEND RESORT TO ANY MILITANT ACTION UNTIL AFTER HE HAS TALKED TO YOU.

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MATTHEWS

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